CBS NEWS

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So, as winter reluctantly gives way to a cold rainy spring, the soot and dirt gives stripes to the tenement and the brownstone and the skyscraper, making the city seem even more like a prison. Spring does not come gently.

Alabama was, at one and the same time, the most uplifting and disgusting of experiences. But it was above all else, it was a necessary experience. The social revolution in this country has meaning in only such a personal experience. The experience itself does not mean you understand it. It is more complex than that. But it allows you to feel it.

You stand in a small church in the Negro section of Selma, Alabama (there usually isn't room to sit), day after day, and see the faces, and hear the voices, and sense (in however small a way) the courage and the frustration and the urgency. You see lives offered for an ideal, for a dream, and you wonder about your life, about your ideals, about your dreams. And about your courage.

You hear an angry white man (there are so many angry white men there) in a Howard Johnson's yell at a waitress that he doesn't want to be with a bunch of nigger lovers, because you're in the restaurant.

You're scared, actually frightened in Camden, Alabama by the hate and the rough whites who dare you to pass them on the sidewalk; who tell you to "take a nigger home with you and see how they smell." And you fear the local whites who linger behind you as the hastily appointed posse meets a march of demonstrators on Whiskey Run Road, a mile from town; standing there in their dirty jeans and T-shirts as the mayor faces the Negroes and tells them "if you're going to come here like a herd of cattle, we're going to treat you like a herd of cattle." You're even more scared on a Saturday night, driving alone on the highway (the now famous Highway 80) between Selma and Montgomery and a crazy white kid tries to run you off the road, into a ditch.

You're moved by the funeral of Jimmie Lee Jackson, killed by a state trooper during a demonstration at Marion, Alabama. You stand outside Brown's Chapel in a misty rain and watch the young people march slowly down Sylvan Street,

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OR RATHER YOU INSIST FIERCELY

singing so ~~slowly~~ SOFTLY you can barely hear them until they are almost upon you, "We Shall Overcome." And you silently pray that they shall overcome, that black and white together they shall overcome, that truth will set us free.

And then comes Sunday, March 7; the first attempt to march on Montgomery. The confrontation, across from a hamburger stand and a car dealer; before the eyes of the hating crowd who seem to have come to a Sunday picnic, a carnival of horrors; and before the eyes of the world (and of God's?). The blue uniforms, and the confederate flags tatooed on their helmets. The posse, the "squirrel shooters", on horseback. The order to advance. The charge. The clubs. The tear gas. The screams of the marchers, of the women. The screams of the rebel yell. It is courage and horror that's hard to imagine; even harder to accept.

So what you try to remember is the night after, Monday night in Brown's Chapel. "Do not hate." The church so crowded; the people so patient. The singing of the choir. "Let it shine." "C'mon in." "When the saints THEIR LEADER come marchin' in." And then, while they wait for Martin Luther King, it seems as if the saints do come marching in. From the back of the church the first white clergymen from the north come marching in, their bags in their hands. They walk to the pulpit and the parishoners get up to make room for them; they stand as one and sing..."mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." You are moved beyond all expression. If you are not shedding tears of outrage, you are shedding tears of compassion and shame. And so it goes for 14 days and nights.

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To write, you must be able to see. And sense. And feel. And dare. And hear. You must experience. Or dream. Or both.

1965. From Austin, Texas. To Caroline County, Virginia. To London, and Woodford-Wanstead. To Washington. To Los Angeles. To Las Vegas. To Montgomery, and Selma. To Los Angeles. To San Diego. To Minneapolis. To Chicago, and Russiaville, Indiana. And back to Russiaville and Chicago. To Boston. To Chicago, and Hannibal, Missouri. To Hazelton, Pennsylvania. To Lewiston, Maine. To New Haven. To Washington. To Los Angeles. To San Francisco and Vallicitos. To St. John, the Virgin Islands. To Chapel Hill, and Raleigh and Charlotte. To Reno, and Carson City. And Los Angeles. To Bergen, Norway; and Stavanger. To Stockholm. To Copenhagen. To Berlin. To Madrid. To Miami. To Princeton. To Cambridge. To Reno, and Carson City; and Los Angeles. To Washington. To New Brunswick and Camp Kilmer. To Gloucester, Massachusetts. To Los Angeles.

And where does it all lead. What does it all mean.